

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Amended) A molten metal infiltrating method for infiltrating a linear material with a molten metal, wherein the linear material previously is coated with a flux immediately before the material is infiltrated with the molten metal,

wherein the linear material is a carbon fiber and the flux is lithium chloride or sodium chloride.

2. (Currently Amended) A molten metal infiltrating method comprising the steps of:
continuously introducing a linear material, to be a core, into a bath container through an inlet seal portion provided in a bottom part of the bath container, having a molten metal in a pressurized inside;

consecutively drawing the linear material out of an outlet seal portion provided in a top part of the bath container, and

continuously coating the linear material, introduced into the bath container through the inlet seal portion, with a flux by a flux coating reservoir ~~provided immediately prior to~~ directly attached to one end of the inlet seal portion, such that the linear material is introduced into the bath container immediately after coating with the flux;

wherein the linear material is a carbon fiber and the flux is lithium chloride or sodium chloride.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A molten metal infiltrating apparatus comprising:
a bath container having an inlet seal portion in a bottom part; and
flux coating means for coating, with a flux, a linear material continuously introduced into the bath container through the inlet seal portion, the flux coating means provided immediately prior to the inlet seal portion,

wherein the flux coating means is directly attached to one end of the inlet seal portion.

6. (Currently amended) The molten metal infiltration apparatus of claim 5,
~~wherein~~further comprising a source for a carbon fiber to be used as the linear material-is-a carbon
~~fiber and a source for lithium chloride or sodium chloride to be used as the flux-is lithium~~
~~chloride or sodium chloride.~~

7. (Currently Amended) A molten metal infiltration apparatus comprising:

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a gas-pressurized bath container having an inlet seal portion in a bottom part capable of continuously receiving a linear material; and

a flux coating reservoir for coating the linear material with a flux,

wherein a top portion of the flux coating reservoir is directly connected to the inlet seal portion of the bath container.

8. (Currently amended) A molten metal infiltration apparatus comprising:

a gas-pressurized bath container having an inlet seal portion in a bottom part capable of continuously receiving a linear material; and

a flux coating reservoir for coating the linear material with a flux,

wherein a side portion of the flux coating reservoir is directly connected to the inlet seal portion of the bath container.